

MONUMENT IN FRANCE TO COLORED AMERICAN INFANTRY
REGIMENTS ATTACHED TO THE FRENCH ARMY

FEBRUARY 9, 1925.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the
state of the Union and ordered to be printed

Mr. FISH, from the Committee on Foreign Affairs, submitted the
following

REPORT

[To accompany H. R. 12165]

The Committee on Foreign Affairs, to which was referred the bill (H. R. 12165) authorizing the erection of a monument in France to commemorate the valiant services of the colored American Infantry regiments attached to the French Army, having had the same under consideration, reports back to the House without amendment and recommends that the bill do pass.

The purpose of this bill is to authorize the expenditure of \$30,000 to erect a monument in France to commemorate the gallant services of the four colored Infantry regiments comprising the Ninety-third American Division attached to the French Army. The regiments included in the bill are: The Three hundred and sixty-ninth, a volunteer regiment from New York, formerly known as the Fifteenth New York Infantry; the Three hundred and seventieth, a volunteer regiment from Illinois, formerly the Eighth Illinois; the Three hundred and seventy-first, a drafted regiment; and the Three hundred and seventy-second, composed of a separate battalion from Ohio; one from the District of Columbia, and separate companies from Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Maryland. Three of these regiments had their colors decorated with the French war cross for gallantry on the field of battle. The total casualties of these four Infantry regiments which had a battle strength of approximately 10,000, or 2,500 to a regiment, were 457 killed and 3,468 wounded, or 40 per cent of the effectives. With the exception of the First and Second Divisions there are not many American divisions which had a higher percentage of killed and wounded. These four regiments were the only American regiments attached to the French Army during the war for administration, supply, and operations, each regiment being assigned to different French divisions. After very

limited combat instructions behind the lines the French began training them in quiet defensive sectors. All the American equipment was turned in and the men were given the Label French rifle, bayonets, packs, and other equipment of the French poilus, only the American khaki uniforms being retained.

The following is a brief summary of the operations of each of the four regiments:

THREE HUNDRED AND SIXTY-NINTH INFANTRY

The Three hundred and sixty-ninth Infantry was the first negro combat unit to reach France, having landed at Brest on December 30, 1917, being among the first 100,000 American soldiers to go overseas. It was also the first negro regiment to see service in the front lines, taking over a quiet sector the first week in April, 1918, and was later the first American regiment to reach the Rhine after the armistice.

The Three hundred and sixty-ninth Infantry served for 20 days in active sectors and an extended period in training in the line and holding quiet sectors. It held the front line between Ville sur Tourbe and the Main de Massiges during the German offensive July 15 to 18, and for the next 10 days helped drive the Germans back to their original lines at the Maison de Champagne.

All the service of the regiment was on the Champagne front except for 27 days in the Vosges Mountains. During the time the regiment formed a part of the Sixteenth and One hundred and sixty-first French Divisions. Its battle casualties throughout its operations in France were 153 killed, including 15 white officers, and 1,116 wounded. The regiment never mustered full strength. It sailed under the old National Guard quota of 150 men to a company instead of the war basis of 250. Perhaps the most outstanding feat performed by the regiment was its attack and capture of positions on the heights south of Sechault (Champagne) and later in capturing the town itself.

THREE HUNDRED AND SEVENTIETH INFANTRY

The Three hundred and seventieth Infantry at various times and at different points on the front served as part of the Tenth, Thirty-fourth, Thirty-sixth, Fifty-ninth, and Seventy-third French Divisions. This regiment spent a considerable period in quiet sectors and 31 days in active sectors. Its battle casualties were 90 killed and 803 wounded.

Perhaps the most outstanding feats performed by the Three hundred and seventieth Infantry during the World War were its attack on the Ailette River, near Pinon (northeast of Soissons), and at Chantrud Farm (northeast of Soissons) on November 3, 1918, when 70 men were killed and wounded by shell fire.

THREE HUNDRED AND SEVENTY-FIRST INFANTRY

The Three hundred and seventy-first Infantry served at various times at different parts of the front as part of the Thirty-eighth and One hundred and fifty-seventh Divisions, and as a part of the Ninth and Thirteenth French Corps. This regiment spent many days in quiet sectors and four days in active sectors. Its battle casualties were 121 killed and 946 wounded.

Perhaps the most outstanding feat performed by the regiment during the war was its attack upon and capture of a portion of the

heights near Sechault (Champagne) and the towns of Ardeuil and Montfauxelle (Champagne).

THREE HUNDRED AND SEVENTY-SECOND INFANTRY

The Three hundred and seventy-second Infantry served at various times and at various points on the front as a part of the Thirty-fifth, Sixty-third, and One hundred and fifty-seventh French Divisions. Elements of the regiment spent many days in quiet sectors and nine days in active sectors. Its battle casualties were 93 killed and 603 wounded.

Perhaps the most outstanding feat performed by the regiment during the war was its attack upon and capture of the Cotes-des-Observatoires (Champagne) on the heights near Sechault and its attack upon the town of Sechault.

These four regiments received over 400 individual decorations for extraordinary heroism under fire, officially proving the gallant conduct of negro troops in modern warfare. All four of these regiments were reorganized to conform with the French tactical units of 194 men to a company instead of 250, the war strength in the American Army. One company in each battalion was converted into a machine-gun company, thereby providing three machine-gun companies to a regiment instead of one. The average strength of each of these regiments were approximately 2,500.

The Battle Monument Commission completed a project on November 21, 1924, for the erection of commemorative monuments and memorial chapels on the various battle fields and in the eight American cemeteries which would cost approximately \$3,000,000 and would include all the American divisions engaged in active sectors in France and Belgium, with the exception of the Ninety-third colored division.

The Ninety-second Division, which was also composed of negro soldiers, participated for a short time in the Meuse-Argonne offensive and will be included with all the other American divisions that fought between the Meuse River and the Argonne Forest in the \$350,000 monument to be erected at Montfaucon. This division lost 255 killed, including 7 officers, and 1,318 wounded.

The following is a list showing the location, casualties, and approximate cost of the commemorative monuments to be erected by the Battle Monument Commission, according to their recent report:

	Killed	Wounded	Total	Approximate cost
Montfaucon.....				\$350,000
St. Mihiel.....				250,000
Chateau-Thierry.....				200,000
Nancy.....				100,000
Tours.....				160,000
Rome, Italy.....				80,000
Audenarde.....	485	1,678	2,158	30,000
Ypres.....	144	731	875	30,000
Bony.....	1,519	5,157	6,676	30,000
LeCateau.....	788	4,306	5,094	30,000
Amiens.....	65	454	519	30,000
Juigny.....			2,740	30,000
Vesle River.....	1,423	8,663	10,086	30,000
Soissons.....	1,733	10,149	11,882	30,000
Somme.....	1,163	5,995	7,158	30,000
Operations between Consenvoye and Wavrille on east bank of Meuse River southeast of Reims.....			1,513	30,000
South of Sedan.....				30,000

It will be noted that at least five monuments are to be erected for considerably less battle casualties than those incurred by the Infantry regiments of the Ninety-third Division.

Although the bill does not specify where the proposed monument is to be located it is generally understood that a site will be selected by the Battle Monument Commission either on the heights to the south of Sechault, or somewhere in the vicinity of Sechault, France, which was captured on September 29, 1918, after suffering heavy casualties by the Three hundred and sixty-ninth Infantry and a part of the Three hundred and seventy-second Infantry. The Three hundred and seventy-first were engaged in the same offensive a few miles on the left flank. This is the regiment which brought down three boche airplanes by rifle and machine-gun fire, an unprecedented record never equaled even by French regiments throughout the entire war. The Three hundred and seventieth Infantry did most of its fighting to the northeast of Soissons, but notwithstanding it seems appropriate and equitable that it should be included in the monument with the other three regiments that made up the Ninety-third Division, if it so desires.

The main reasons for seeking this separate monument are that it is a simple act of justice to four gallant colored regiments which were the only American Infantry regiments attached to the French Army. These four regiments composed all there was of the Ninety-third Division, which was the only American division to engage in an active sector, that will not have its name on a monument in the locality in which it fought. As long as life remains in the men and officers of these four regiments there will be a determined effort to do away with this discrimination and see that justice is done. These colored soldiers belonging to these combat units demonstrated that if properly trained, equipped, and led that they will equal the best soldiers in any army in the world for bravery and fighting qualities. They endured all the hardships without a murmur, slept in the cold and rain, and faced death from high explosives, shrapnel, gas, and machine guns with the same fortitude, loyalty, and courage as the other American divisions. These colored regiments were known to the French as "les Joyeux," or the happy ones, as they carried out orders without grumbling and always made the best of the conditions with which they had to contend.

There were over 400,000 negro soldiers in the United States Army by the armistice and about 40,000 on the battle line. The erection of the proposed monument would be a wonderful inspiration not only to these 400,000 colored soldiers but to the entire Negro race in America, amounting to 12,000,000 people, who contributed their blood and their treasure to help win the war. It would be a constant source of inspiration for future service to their country both in times of peace and war. Such a monument would not only teach loyalty and patriotism but would carry a message to the Negro race that there is no discrimination for the soldier who wears the United States uniform and is willing and glad to lay down his life for his country; for the life of a colored soldier is just as dear to his mother, his wife, or his family as that of any other soldier that was ever born. The record of these four negro Infantry regiments entitles them to the grateful recognition of a grateful Republic. Empires may rise

and fall but a Republic that is grateful to its defenders will never perish from the face of the earth.

The following are quotations from well-known Americans:

I can not commend too highly the spirit shown among the colored combat troops, who exhibit fine capacity for quick training and eagerness for the most dangerous work.—John J. Pershing.

The colored men, who were subject to draft, are to be commended upon their promptness and eagerness in registering their names for service in the National Army, and likewise mention is made of the relative low percentage of exemption claims filed by them. Those in the service of their country prove faithful and efficient and will uphold the traditions of their race.—Newton D. Baker.

I congratulate all colored men and women and all their white fellow Americans upon the gallantry and efficiency with which the colored men have behaved at the front, and the efficiency and wish to render service which have been shown by both the colored men and the colored women behind them in this country.—Theodore Roosevelt.

The following is a statement by Col. James A. Moss, commanding Three hundred and sixty-seventh Infantry, United States Army, and one of the best known writers on military subjects in the world:

Having been born and reared in the State of Louisiana, whose confines I did not leave until I went to West Point at the age of 18, and having served 18 years with colored troops, including two campaigns, what I say about the colored man as a soldier is therefore based on many years' experience with him in civil life and in the Army—in peace and in war, in garrison and in the field: "If properly trained and instructed, the colored man makes as good a soldier as the world has ever seen. The history of the negro in all of our wars, including our Indian campaigns, shows this. He is by nature of a happy disposition; he is responsive and tractable; he is very amenable to discipline; he takes pride in his uniform; he has faith and confidence in his leader; he possesses physical courage—all of which are valuable military assets."



